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ABSTRACT

Defining social cognition as our attempts to make sense of how people think, perceive, infer, feel, and react, this book examines both the classical issues and contemporary understanding of theory and research in social cognitive development. The initial chapters highlight one of the central, theoretical tensions in the field, which is whether the development of understanding people is fundamentally different from understanding things. Subsequent sections are devoted to development across specific areas of social cognition from infancy through adolescence. These chapters survey the latest research into how children come to understand that transient internal states such as thoughts, desires, and emotions as well as more enduring traits such as personality influence their own and others' behavior. The text concludes with a comprehensive examination of the development of moral aspects of social cognition. The chapters are: (1) "Introduction" (Suzanne Hala); (2) "An Explication of Piaget's Constructivism: Implications for Social Cognitive Development" (Jeremy Carpendale); (3) "Vygotsky's Sociocultural Approach: Theoretical Issues and Implications for Current Research" (Charles Fernyhough); (4) "The Development of Meaning in Infancy: Early Communication and Social Understanding" (Fabia Franco); (5) "Infants' Understanding of Affect" (Arlene S. Walker-Andrews and Linnea R. Dickson); (6) "All in the Mind: Children's Understanding of Mental Life" (Suzanne Hala and Jeremy Carpendale); (7) "Peeling the Onion: A Multilayered View of Children's Emotional Development" (Mita Banerjee); (8) "Children's Understanding of Traits" (Nicola Yuill); (9) "Moral Development in the Broader Context of Personality" (Lawrence J. Walker and Karl H. Hennig); (10) "Social Cognition and Prosocial Development" (Nancy Eisenberg, Sandra Losoya, and Ivanna K. Guthrie); and (11) "What Do Children and Adolescents Think about Themselves? A Developmental Account of Self-Concept" (Luis Garcia, Daniel Hart, and Rita Johnson-Ray). Individual chapters contains references. (HTH)